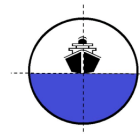




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**Providing Information about the U. S. Submarine Force**

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## USS Florida (SSGN 728) Continues Transformation

By Chief Journalist (SW/AW) Mark O. Piggott

PORTSMOUTH, Va. (NNS) -- Cmdr. Gregory M. Ott relieved Cmdr. David M. Duryea as commanding officer, USS Florida (SSGN 728), April 16 at Norfolk Naval Shipyard.

This was another milestone in Florida's transformation from ballistic missile submarine to guided-missile submarine.

"Historic Norfolk Naval Shipyard is the nation's first public shipyard, and no stranger to naval transformation," said Vice Adm. Kirkland H. Donald, commander, Naval Submarine Forces. "It has been no easy task (for Duryea) taking Florida from her role as an SSBN, combining crews, accomplishing the first launch of a Tomahawk cruise missile from an Ohio-class submarine missile tube, completing the Chief of Naval Operations' first Sea Trial Experiment, 'Giant Shadow,' and bringing his submarine into the shipyard for a refueling overhaul and conversion," Donald continued.

"But through his keen tactical expertise, astute leadership, unwavering standards and personal concern for the crew, Dave was worthy of the task, and this magnificent crew rose to the challenge."



Florida entered Norfolk Naval Shipyard in July 2003 to undergo a refueling and conversion from an SSBN to an SSGN. A transformational submarine, both physically and conceptually, SSGNs could operate in otherwise inaccessible areas to provide unique capabilities.

This includes carrying up to 154 cruise missiles that can be launched in rapid succession, 66 Special Operations Forces (SOF) personnel, a swimmer lock-out shelter, and an Advanced SEAL Delivery System (ASDS). These features would provide a transformational degree of firepower in a survivable and virtually undetectable platform that can remain on station indefinitely.

Florida is scheduled to complete her conversion and rejoin the fleet in 2006. *RP*



## DSRV Mystic departs for PACIFIC REACH

*Courtesy COMSUBPAC Rep West Coast Public Affairs*

NAVAL BASE CORONADO – The Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) Mystic was loaded onto a transport plane and flown to South Korea this weekend to participate in Pacific Reach 2004. The U.S. Navy will join with the navies from South Korea, Japan, Singapore, and Australia for Pacific Reach 2004 that runs through May 13 in Jinhae, South Korea.

The Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS LAJOLLA (SSN 701) and the rescue and salvage ship USS SAFEGUARD (ARS 50) will also be participating in the exercise. Nations observing the exercise are Canada, China, Chile, France, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Russia, Thailand, the United Kingdom and Vietnam.

Pacific Reach 2004 is the third in a series of bi-annual exercises designed to promote cooperation and interoperability in the area of submarine rescue,

enhancing the ability to provide mutual humanitarian assistance in the unlikely event a submarine becomes disabled and is not able to return to the surface on its own. The exercise will provide participating navies the opportunity to work with each other and address the unique needs, capabilities, and operational challenges inherent in the large area covered by the Pacific Ocean with operating temperatures and weather conditions ranging from arctic to tropical.

DSRV Mystic was originally designed to give the United States Navy a primary submarine escape capability. Its mission is to provide a quick reaction, worldwide, all-weather capability to rescue personnel from disabled submarines at depths up to 2,000 ft.

## **Status of the Force**

(Updated 4/30/04)

**17 Submarines underway**

**8 Submarines on deployment**



## **USS Hampton breaks through at the North Pole for ICEX '04**

by Chief Journalist Kevin Elliot, USNR, Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet Public Affairs

With a burst of air into the forward ballast tanks, USS Hampton (SSN 767) surfaced through a thin sheet of ice at the North Pole on April 19, 2004. These Sailors experienced something very few have done... Surfacing at the top of the world.

"Of all the amazing things I've done in a submarine this was one of the most amazing," said CDR Robert Burke, commanding officer of Hampton. "I was struck by the dead silence, the absolute crispness of the air and the absolute foreign feeling of the environment. I could have been on the surface of the moon."

Hampton had sailed over 5,000 miles from Norfolk during ICEX 04, an exercise to demonstrate a submarine's ability to operate under the ice of the Arctic Ocean for an extended period of time.

ICEX is a joint United States and United Kingdom operation. The Royal Navy's HMS Tireless surfaced first and advised Hampton of an open spot in the ice nearby.

After three weeks underway, Hampton's crew was ready for a break. They tossed a football, hit a few golf balls and generally played in the snow, took each other's picture and visited the HMS Tireless.

"I made some new friends up at the North Pole," said Electronics Technician 1st Class Adam Burchette. "They gave us a tour of the ship, then we sat in the mess and drank tea. They told us about their country and we told them about ours."

The blue ice fascinated Lt.(j.g.) Lawrence W. Thompson of Kansas City. "Being from the Midwest, I'm not a stranger to snow, but you don't realize how barren it is here until you walk around," he said. "It's just miles and miles of ice. A lot of the ice formations have a blue look to them because they've been compacted for years and there is no air left. It's so compacted it only reflects the blue light."

The Hampton and her crew were at the North Pole for 16 hours then submerged to continue the ICEX exercise.

ICEX 04 has been in the planning stages for two years to ensure the submarine force can operate proficiently in every possible environment. Hampton's crew made the most of their chance to participate in ICEX and their time on the ice at the North Pole. *R*

## **In the news...**

### **New Submarine Squadron Stands Up on Subase Bangor**

SILVERDALE, Wash. (NNS) -- Commander, Submarine Squadron (CSS) 19 stood up April 1 to augment CSS 17 with supporting boats on the waterfront at Naval Submarine Base (Subase) Bangor. CSS 17's mission has been to support the nine boats and 18 crews that make up the strategic deterrent force in the Pacific. The decision to stand up CSS 19 gives the Sailors of the boats the added attention they need.

### **Canadian Submarine Officer Completed U.S. Training**

NORFOLK, Va. (NNS) -- Lt. Cmdr. James A. Clarke, a native of Sarnia, Ontario, Canada, completed the 9-week Prospective Commanding Officer (PCO) course in 2003 at Commander, Naval Submarine Forces Headquarters in Norfolk, Va. This was the first time a Canadian officer has completed this demanding course.



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## **Commander, Naval Submarine Forces**

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